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**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM, PRO-ACTIVE  
PERSONALITY AND SOCIAL SUPPORT ON CAREER  
ADAPTABILITY AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS**

**By**

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**Thesis Submitted To  
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Management**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Career adaptability refers to the flexible attribute of individuals toward their career endeavor in the face of volatile circumstances. As Malaysia is reaching its goal to achieve an industrialized nation status by 2020 and the increase in ageing population in 2030, there is a need to have a workforce that possess a high level of career adaptability in order to boost workforce efficiency. This can be achieved by having graduates that are highly intellectual, positive work-attitude, spontaneous and flexible to keep abreast with relevant and current skills and technical knowhow in the prevailing labour market in the country. The current level of shortage of required skills and attributes by fresh graduates in the country is alarming, thus drastic measures need to be taken by all stake holders, including the Human resource professionals, career counsellors, lecturers, government and the family institution. This study is to assess the level of career adaptability among undergraduate students by determining the relationship between career adaptability and self-esteem, proactive personality and social support among undergraduate students in public universities in Malaysia. Data was obtained from 188 questionnaires targeting undergraduate final year students of Bachelor of Business administration (BBA) taking the seminar course in Universiti Utara Malaysia, Kedah. The result analyzed with Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) indicates a positive and significant correlation between pro-active personality and social support with the career adaptability level among the undergraduate students; with pro-active personality having the strongest significant positive relationship. It is noteworthy to mention that self-esteem did not indicate a significant relationship with career adaptability, because of the lack of mediating factor such as career exploration. It is recommended that there is a need to form a synergy among career counsellors, human professionals, lecturers and family members in order to boost the career adaptability of these students. This will enable the students to attain the necessary soft skills such as communication, decision making, critical thinking, interpersonal skill and English language proficiency. These skills are highly required in today`s competitive and volatile labour market, so that they can have a smooth school to work transition in the nearest future.

**Keywords:** career adaptability, self-esteem, pro-active personality, social support.

## ABSTRAK

Kebolehsuaian kerjaya (*career adaptability*) merujuk kepada ciri fleksibel individu yang berusaha kearah kerjaya mereka bagi menghadapi keadaan yang tidak menentu. Dalam usaha Malaysia mencapai matlamat bagi menjadi sebuah negara perindustrian menjelang tahun 2020 dan peningkatan kadar penuaan penduduk pada tahun 2030, wujud keperluan untuk mempunyai tenaga kerja yang memiliki tahap kebolehsuaian kerjaya dalam usaha untuk meningkatkan kecekapan tenaga kerja. Ini akan dapat dicapai dengan mempunyai graduan yang intelektual, mempunyai sikap kerja yang positif, spontan dan fleksible bagi melengkapkan diri dengan kemahiran yang relevan dan semasa serta mempunyai maklumat teknikal yang bersesuaian dengan pasaran buruh semasa dalam negara. Kadar pengangguran semasa di negara ini membimbangkan dan langkah-langkah drastik perlu diambil oleh semua pemegang taruh, termasuk golongan profesional sumber manusia, kaunselor kerjaya, pensyarah, kerajaan dan institusi keluarga. Kajian ini melihat tahap kebolehsuaian kerjaya di kalangan mahasiswa dengan menentukan hubungan antara kebolehsuaian kerjaya dengan harga diri, personaliti proaktif dan sokongan sosial di kalangan pelajar di institusi pengajian tinggi awam di Malaysia. Data diperolehi daripada 188 soal selidik yang diedarkan kepada pelajar tahun akhir program Sarjana Muda Pengurusan Sarjana Muda Perniagaan (BBA) yang mengambil kursus seminar di Universiti Utara Malaysia, Kedah. Data dianalisa menggunakan pakej statistik SPSS menunjukkan hubungan yang positif dan signifikan antara personaliti proaktif dan sokongan sosial dengan tahap kebolehsuaian kerjaya di kalangan mahasiswa; dengan personaliti proaktif mempunyai hubungan positif yang paling signifikan. Perlu di nyatakan bahawa faktor harga diri tidak menunjukkan hubungan dengan kebolehsuaian kerjaya, kerana tiada faktor pengantara seperti penerokaan kerjaya. Adalah disyorkan terdapat keperluan untuk membentuk sinergi antara kaunselor kerjaya, pegawai sumber manusia, pensyarah dan ahli keluarga dalam usaha untuk meningkatkan keupayaan menyesuaikan diri kerjaya dikalangan pelajar. Ini akan membolehkan mereka untuk mencapai kemahiran asas yang perlu seperti komunikasi, pembuatan keputusan, pemikiran kritis, kemahiran interpersonal dan kemahiran berbahasa Inggeris. Kemahiran ini amat diperlukan untuk menghadapi keadaan persaingan pasaran masa kini agar mereka boleh bersedia untuk peralihan yang baik dari institusi pendidikan kepada alam pekerjaan dalam masa terdekat.

Kata kunci: kebolehsuaian kerjaya, harga diri, personality proaktif, sokongan sosial

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## **ABBREVIATION**

DV	Dependent variable
IV	Independent variable
SPM	Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia
Sijil STPM	Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia
MD	Medical doctor
PhD	Doctor of philosophy
PTPTN	Perbadanan Tabung Pendidikan Tinggi Nasional
Std. Error	Standard Error
Sig.	Significance
ILO	International Labour Organization
SCCT	Social Cognitive Career Theory
CCT	Career construction theory
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Science

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Career adaptability is the competency of a person to create series of transitions effectively, whereby the labor market, organizations and fundamental occupational and organizational knowledge bases undergo significant transformation (Bimrose et al, 2011). This series of transition is necessary because of the increased graduates from Malaysia Universities without necessary skills and abilities to survive in the competitive labor market. This leads to months of futile job search which is mostly caused by the career inflexibility of these young Malaysian graduates. This chapter depicts an outline of the situation with the background of study, statement of the problem, followed by the research questions, research objective, and significance of the study, scope of study / limitation and organization of the chapters in thesis.

#### **1.2 Background of study**

Global market competitions and technological developments are upsurging the demand for skills and knowledge of graduates in an extensive range of jobs more than before (Tran, 2013; Nel & Neale-Shutte, 2013). This has influenced people's lives and the manner in which they search for and perform their job duties (Nota et al, 2012). This is related to career exploration by graduates on the most suitable job for their innate skills. This has resulted to individuals choosing to improve professional

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